

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 217

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB, US, MOPS, PINT, ID, AG, CH

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH LONG BORET

1. I MET WITH LONG BORET AT FOUR P.M. AUGUST 8. GIST OF HIS COMMENTS AMOUNT TO THE NEED FOR THE GKR TO GET THROUGH THE DRY SEASON IF THE POLITICAL SOLUTION IN CAMBODIA IS TO BE ANYTHING LESS THAN A SURRENDER.

2. LONG BORET SAID HE IS MEETING WITH KHMER MILITARY AND HIS MINISTERS LATER IN THE EVENING TO GET A PRECISE PICTURE OF THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION. HOWEVER, NOTHING IS BEING PLANNED RIGHT NOW BY HIM WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A CEASEFIRE OR A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

3. HE SAID THAT WHILE IN BALI HE MET WITH INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK, WHO CABLED ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA THAT LONG BORET IS SENDING HIM A PERSONAL LETTER IN WHICH HE ASKS BOUTEFLIKA TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARY WITH SIHANOUK. APPARENTLY BOUTEFLIKA HAS AGREED TO BE HELPFUL, ACCORDING TO LONG BORET. MALIK ALSO PROMISED TO BOUTEFLIKA THAT IN THE EVENT LATTER CAN GET THE KHMERS ON THE OTHER SIDE TO ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE, MALIK WOULD OFFER JAKARTA AS SITE. LONG BORET SAID THAT IF BOUTEFLIKA GETS EVEN SLIGHTEST ENCOURAGEMENT FROM SIHANOUK, LONG BORET WOULD IMMEDIATELY OFFER TO MEET WITH BOUTEFLIKA ANYWHERE TO WORK OUT DETAILS.

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4. IN BANGKOK LONG BORET SAID HE HAD DINNER IN HIS ROOM WITH SIHANOUK'S SON, NORODOM YUVENEATH. LATTER SAID THAT "SIHANOUK WILL NOT NEGOTIATE" AND SUGGESTED THAT KHMERS SHOULD INVITE HIS FATHER BACK. THIS IMPLIES ABANDONMENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY. LONG BORET SAID HE COULD NOT ACT UNILATERALLY BECAUSE DECISION OF THAT MAGNITUDE WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY ALL ELEMENTS IN PHNOM PENH. HE ALSO POINTED OUT TO SIHANOUK'S SON THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF KHMERS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY. THE ONLY TANGIBLE RESULT OF THAT MEETING WAS THAT LONG BORET CONVEYED TO SIHANOUK'S SON THE ARDENT DESIRE OF THE KHMERS ON THIS SIDE TO FIND AN EARLY POLITICAL SOLUTION IN WHICH SIHANOUK WOULD PLAY THE KEY ROLE. PRINCE YUVENEATH IS NOW GOING BACK TO PEKING TO CONVEY THAT MESSAGE TO HIS FATHER.

5. LONG BORET WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE MORAL OF THE KHMER MILITARY AND THOUGHT THEY WOULD FIGHT TO DEFEND PHNOM PENH PROVIDED THE US GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES THE NECESSARY AID. (HE HAD NOT YET TALKED TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF FANK WHEN HE MADE THIS STATEMENT.) HE THOUGHT THAT PHNOM PENH'S MORALE WOULD HOLD UP UNTIL THE US CONGRESS HAD DECIDED ON PRESIDENT FORD'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID. HOWEVER, IF THE VOTE WERE NEGATIVE, LONG BORET SAID PANIC WOULD ENSUE WITHIN 24 HOURS IN PHNOM PENH AND IT COULD TURN INTO PANDEMONIUM. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES LONG BORET INQUIRED WHETHER THE AMERICAN MISSION WOULD REMAIN IN PHNOM PENH. I REPLIED THAT I ASSESS THE SITUATION ON A DAILY BASIS. OBVIOUSLY I CANNOT RISK RECKLESSLY THE LIVES OF AMERICANS AND THIS WOULD BE THE CASE IF THE MILITARY SITUATION WERE COLLAPSING RAPIDLY AND WE WERE TO REMAIN. HOWEVER, I STRESSED THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME THE AMERICAN MISSION IS STILL VERY LARGE AND ITS MEMBERS HAVE SHARED SO FAR THE FATE OF THE KHMER POPULATION. I POINTED OUT THAT THE AMERICAN MISSION IS LARGER TODAY THAN WAS ANY OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSION BEFORE THE GENERAL EXODUS.

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6. LONG BORET ASKED ME WHAT PLANS I HAD IN THE EVENT THE WORST WOULD HAPPEN. I SAID I EXPECTED TO HAVE SOME SPACE AVAILABLE FOR SOME KEY KHMER LEADERS AND THAT WE WOULD TRY TO TAKE THEM TO SAFETY. HOWEVER, THE SPACE AVAILABLE WOULD BE QUITE LIMITED AND IF IT EVER CAME TO THIS SITUATION I WOULD NOT WISH TO BE IN THE POSITION OF PLAYING GOD AND DETERMINING WHO GOES AND WHO STAYS BEHIND. I SAID I WOULD LEAVE IT TO ACTING PRESIDENT

SAUKHAM KHOY AND TO HIM AS PRIME MINISTER TO DETERMINE
WHO SHOULD LEAVE WITH US IF ALL HOPE IS LOST.

7. DESPITE THIS SOMEWHAT PESSIMISTIC DISCUSSION ABOUT
EVACUATION, ON THE WHOLE LONG BORET WAS STILL FULL OF
ENERGY AND OPTIMISM ABOUT THE KHMER ABILITY TO HANG IN
THERE, PROVIDED AMERICAN ASSISTANCE IS FORTHCOMING.
DEAN

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